

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-18 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1-3 are amended and claims 12-18 are added.

Claims 1-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Sugiyama et al. (U.S. Patent No. 7,175,613) in view of Ando (JP-A-10-295723). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 1 recites a hollow space provided between the second leak preventer and the absorber at least in a front end of the second leak preventer, the front end being disposed on the front side of the absorbent article, the hollow space opening out toward the front side of the absorbent article and being configured as a flow passage to flow the body fluid received on a front side of the absorber toward a rear side of the absorber.

Thus, the absorbent article in amended claim 1 is able to transfer the excreted urine smoothly through the hollow to the absorber present under the second leak preventer (see page 17, lines 13-18, for example). Therefore, the combination of features in claim 1 can achieve the below advantage:

"In the absorbent article 100 of the present invention, the absorber 14 is provided above the first leak preventer 10 extending from a front part thereof beneath the second leak preventer 12. Thus, a urine absorption amount significantly increases compared with that of a conventional way, in which urine and feces are separated by a partition member and the urine is absorbed in a front part alone." See page 16, lines 13-20.

Sugiyama fails to disclose or suggest the hollow space, and Ando fails to overcome the deficiencies of Sugiyama. In Ando, a front end of an excretion treating sheet 5 (a right end in Fig. 3) contacts an absorber 10 via a top sheet 8. Specifically, a lower surface of the front end of the excretion treating sheet 5 is bonded to an upper surface of the top sheet 8 with

hot melt adhesive 13. See Fig. 2. Therefore, there is no hollow space which opens out toward the front side of the absorbent article and configured as a flow passage to flow the body fluid. As a result, the advantages of claim 1 described above can not be accomplished by Ando's disposable diaper.

Claims 2-11 are patentable by reason of their dependency from independent claim 1, as well as for the additional features they recite. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

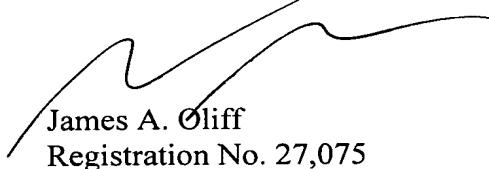
In the absorbent article in new claim 13, the absorber extends from the front part of the first leak preventer to a vicinity of a rear end of the second leak preventer. The advantage of, "a urine absorption amount significantly increases" as described above, is accomplished more effectively.

On the other hand, in Ando, the absorber 10 does not extend to a vicinity of a rear end of the excretion treating sheet 5. Therefore, a urine absorption amount of the absorber 10 is not high.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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JAO:SMS/crh

Attachments:

Petition for Extension of Time  
Request for Continued Examination

Date: February 16, 2010

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